

Pre-Plan of Operations Coordination Process

Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), in its ongoing efforts to improve mine permitting efficiencies, encourages the implementation of a “Pre-Plan of Operations” phase as part of the Plan of Operations (PoO) review process. The following is an outline of the process sequence.

- Step 1- **Operator contacts the BLM.** The operator contacts the Field Office as soon as their decision has been made to pursue the development of a mine Plan of Operations (PoO) or an amendment to an existing PoO and is able to provide conceptual drawings and maps. In many cases, this notification can be one or more years before an actual submittal of a PoO to the BLM.
- Step 2- **Initial Project Presentation.** The operator, along with any technical contractors, conducts a proposed PoO presentation to the BLM. The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection – Bureau of Mining Regulation and Reclamation (BMRR) will be informed of the presentation and may choose to attend. The BLM managers and interdisciplinary team are initially introduced to the project and can begin to formulate and identify issues, concerns, and probable information needs. The BLM will convey to the operator recommendations for baseline studies appropriate for a complete PoO submittal.
- Step 3- **Pre-Plan of Operations Kick-Off Meeting.** Soon after the initial presentation, the operator, the BLM and the BMRR meet to review the project proposal, review the BLM and the BMRR permitting requirements and recommend use of the Voluntary Plan of Operations Outline/Format, determine information needs for the permitting and environmental analysis, and review the applicable agency policies and requirements for mine permitting.
- Step 4- **Documentation of Information Needs.** The BLM provides the operator a documented summary of the relevant known resource issues that are present as well as the baseline studies required per 3809.401 (b) to be completed in support of the future PoO submittal and subsequent environmental analysis.
- Step 5- **Pre-Plan of Operations Project Schedule.** The operator is encouraged to develop a project schedule in coordination with the BLM and the BMRR for the submittal and review of the baseline reports and applications for State permits and submission of the PoO to the BLM.
- Step 6- **Development of the Plan of Operations.** Experienced BLM mining engineers, geologists and hydrologists may offer advice to the operator to improve the PoO submittal; potentially minimizing the number of disparities later on and reduce the review times.
- Step 7- **Submittal of the Plan of Operations.** The operator submits a PoO to the BLM with all baseline reports and information. The BLM determines if the PoO is complete. At that point, the BLM’s regulatory policy and NEPA guidance will govern the remainder of the PoO review and approval process. Coordination with the BLM, the BMRR and any other appropriate agencies throughout this process is essential.